Kerala AW 11

601, 113, 59, 58, 611, 428

[For information pertaining to the above categories, see 5: Karve AW1 India, category 116, pp. 252-270.]

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divorced or widowed women of the group and their children, together with temporarily divorced men or elderly widowers. The kāranavan, his wife, and his immature children would occupy a wing of the ancestral house or a separate building in the same courtyard. Married men of the group would live with their wives and children in separate houses, all on the matrilineal estate. The kāranavan would then allocate separate gardens and rice fields for usufruct to each married man. A junior would often hold such land on kānam tenure from the taravād as a whole. The kāranavan would retain a larger portion of the estate for his own maintenance and that of unmarried persons living in the ancestral house. In any case he retained ultimate management of the whole property and might retract portions of it at will. If, however, a junior man leased new land from the taravād on kurikānam tenure, the improvements he made on it might, by custom although not by law, become the separate property of his mother's matrilineal descendants. If, later, the whole property was divided between major segments of the property group, each branch might take as its share the fields and gardens on which improvements had been made by male members of that branch. In the larger aristocratic taravāds one or two sthānam estates might be set aside for the men immediately junior to the kāranavan. Their holders managed such estates with greater independence than the plots allocated to more junior men. All cultivation was carried on with the aid of Tiyyar laborers attached by hereditary right to the taravād. In some cases also plots were given on sub-tenure to Tiyyar cultivating tenants in the same manner as in Central Kerala.

A man might also—at least in the nineteenth century—with the consent of his own and his wife's kāranavan, lease land on kānam or kurikānam tenure from his wife's taravād. A few junior men actually went to live matrilocally in the wife's ancestral house or in a separate house which they built on the wife's ancestral estate. Houses and improvements to land provided by a husband in this way customarily became the separate property of the wife and her matrilineal descendants. Land on which such improvements had been made also normally passed to the wife's descendants as their share when the whole property of the wife's taravād was finally divided. Matrilocal residence by a junior man was rare and could always be objected to by the man's kāranavan if his services were needed at home. However, a man who was himself a kāranavan had considerable freedom to build a house and develop new gardens on his wife's taravād estate, which would later enrich his wife's matrilineal descendants. If

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the wife's taravād was near his own he might divide his time between his own ancestral house and the private house he had built for his wife and her descendants on her ancestral estate.

Although this was contrary to customary law, some men also managed to give jenmam land outright to a wife and her matrilineal descendants, thus founding a new branch taravād through the wife. This practice greatly increased in the nineteenth century, when new gardens were continually being developed on former waste land and when land became freely marketable. In 1896, indeed, a law was finally passed enabling a man's wife and children to inherit half of his self-acquired intestate property (Malabar Marriage Act, 1896). Occasional gifts of land to the wife and her descendants were, however, known long before the British period, although they were against the law. At the political level, kings and chiefs occasionally gave large domains, together with the office of chief or village headman, to their wives' matrilineal descendants. The chiefships of both Nileswaram and Kadattunad are said to have been formed in this way by gifts from Kolattiri kings before the fourteenth century; both later became virtually independent kingdoms (Logan, 1951, I: 343; Ayyar, 1938: 4). Many smaller territories and political offices were similarly bequeathed during the period of European trade. On a smaller scale, the kāranavan of a Nambiar taravād sometimes managed to take out a portion of the fallow jenmam land of his own taravād, cultivate it, and give it to his wife and her descendants. Naturally, such gifts, which were in no sense a part of acknowledged lawful custom, led to disputes with the donor's matrilineal kin and sometimes, in the next generation, to feuds between lineages.

Gifts of land or improvements by a man to his wife's descendants led to the existence of branch property groups, called *tāvari-taravāds*, within the main property group. After the donor's death the wife's kāranavan might manage such a small estate on behalf of her branch, retaining the income separately for her and her children. More commonly, the donor's eldest son became the kāranavan of the tāvari property, while the branch also continued to receive its ancestral dues out of the property of the taravād as a whole. When a stirpital division of the whole taravād occurred, this branch might claim both its separate estate and its share of the ancestral property. If the donor had been a chief and the gift was large, the branch to which it was given might, however, choose to leave its taravād without taking a share of the ancestral estate and to found a new taravād home on its new land. Tāvari-taravāds were, however, rare among commoners

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matrilocally in a home with the wife's mother and sometimes with others of her older matrilineal kin. Twenty-six couples (49 per cent) lived neolocally in a house provided by the husband and containing no natal kin of either husband or wife. Of these 26 neolocally resident couples, 6 (11 per cent) lived in a house which the husband had inherited from his dead father; 3 (6 per cent of the total) lived in a house which the husband had obtained from his taravād; 14 (26 per cent) lived in a house newly built by the husband for his wife.

These figures may be contrasted with the modern picture in a Central Kerala village, where the marketability of land and labor have also brought about a partial disintegration of matrilineal descent groups and an emergence of the elementary family as a residential and economic unit. Both in Central and in North Kerala, moreover, marriage has been compulsorily monogamous since the 1930's, men have been legally obliged to maintain their wives and children, and the whole of man's private intestate property has passed to his mother, wife, and children at his death (Madras *Marumakkattāyam* Act, 1933; Cochin Nayar Act, 1938; Nair, 1941: 306). In addition, it has now become legally possible for the members of a taravād to divide their matrilineal ancestral property on a per capita basis. Once the ancestral property has been divided into individual shares in this way it becomes private property in law and is heritable in the same manner as are self-acquisitions. Both in Central and North Kerala, therefore, economic change and resultant modern laws have combined to break down traditional matrilineal descent groups.

In Central Kerala, however, population is denser and there has been less waste land available for individual cultivation. Over the past hundred years, therefore, when individual men have acquired private plots, it has more often been through purchase of already cultivated land than through cultivation of virgin land. Further, Nayar men in Central Kerala, having been a professional militia, tended after the disbanding of their armies either to remain non-cultivating owners and tenants or where possible to move into new forms of salaried employment. Central Kerala today is more urbanized than is North Kerala, so that a much greater proportion of Nayars have salaried work in factories, as clerks, as government servants, as schoolteachers, or in the armed services. Many are unemployed and merely live from their ancestral lands. Particularly among retainer Nayars, who are relatively poor, men have amassed less self-acquired land than was possible for Nayar cultivators in North Kerala. Moreover, because Nayar men are often not themselves the cultivators of

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tween them also permitted the observance of the type of very formal etiquette that existed in the Central kingdoms.

A peculiarity of strict avunculocal residence is that it separates a woman from both her sons and her daughters after they are married. The sons return to their ancestral estates and the daughters leave with their husbands. The relationships of mother and children were therefore less continuous than in Central Kerala. However, various particular arrangements did often permit women to live with some of their children for a great part of their lives. Cross-cousin marriage was one of these. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage was the most popular, because by this means the daughter of a kāranavan and his wife could be brought into their dwelling group as the wife of the kāranavan's nephew. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage was also popular but less common.[1] It was less advantageous unless a shift from the normal residential arrangements could be made. This sometimes occurred when a kāranavan succeeded in arranging a marriage between his son and his sister's daughter. The son might then remain on his father's ancestral estate for part of his life in patrilocal residence. Any property which he developed there would pass to his wife's descendants as matrilineal heirs of the estate. In this way a woman might keep one of her sons living with her for a large part of her life.

Women were also commonly reunited with their sons at divorce or widowhood, for they would then return to their taravāds to live. Whatever the circumstances of residence, moreover, a man should place his duties to mother and sisters above those to wife and children. The ideals of devotion and reverence to matrilineal kinswomen were the same as in Central Kerala. Brother and sister were drawn apart by the normal rules of residence but, like mother and son, came together if the sister were divorced or widowed and returned to her taravād. A woman also returned to her taravād for several months at the time of childbirth, for every child had to be born in its own Taravad.

[1] In the Kottayam village already cited, 12 per cent of Nambiar commoner women who had been married had at some time married their father's own or classificatory sister's son; 8 per cent had married their own or classificatory maternal uncle's son. Cross-cousin marriage is, as everywhere in Kerala, more common among the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and chiefs. Of the women of six village headmen's lineages over a period of five generations, 17 per cent had married their father's own or classificatory sister's son, and 13 per cent their own or classificatory maternal uncle's son. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is thus more usual in North than in Central Kerala. One reason for this is that fathers in North Kerala more commonly educate and endow their sons. By this means a father acquires the right to a voice in arranging his son's marriage, often to the father's niece.

Funeral and *śrāddham* rites persist in a fuller form, but these, too, are often curtailed. This is especially the case in *taravāds* which have lost their ancestral wealth. Rice balls are sometimes offered only on the two last days of the pollution period. Only close kin, and not the whole Nāyar community, are invited to the sixteenth day feast. Often no *dīkṣā* is observed at all. Alternatively, twelve sets of *dīkṣā* rites, for the twelve months of the year of mourning, may be performed in succession on the sixteenth day. Often the bones are not taken to a sacred river. If they are taken, it may be believed that the ghost is thenceforth appeased and that no further *śrāddham* or ancestral rites are required.

The role-structure of death rites has also changed. In most households only immediate younger brothers and maternal nephews, or the own children of a deceased woman, take part in the offerings, instead of the whole *taravād* as heretofore. On the other hand, women, as well as men, now offer rice balls to the ghosts of their parents or matrilineal elders. This reflects a change in the legal status of women, and the fact that women are now the legal heads of many recently partitioned households. In elementary family households, spouses now frequently observe death pollution for one another. At the same time, each may now even refuse to attend the funerals of matrilineal kin. Both in Cochin and Kottayam, the son of a man now often replaces the matrilineal heir as chief mourner, especially if he has inherited his father's property. Nāyars indeed say that "the rites go with the property." If there are disputes over the property, sons and nephews may dispute the right to perform the ceremonies, feeling that their performance gives the chief mourner the right of inheritance. Some men perform rites for both father and mother's brother; others, for neither, if neither bequeathed wealth. The beliefs which accompany funeral and *śrāddham* rites have also suffered attrition. In general, the belief that death rites are performed solely to give rest to the spirit is triumphing over the belief in the necessity to propitiate punitive ghosts. On the other hand, the Nāyars do not dwell on the traditional Brahmanical belief in the tortures of hell which await unpropitiated souls. Many state that they now disbelieve in any form of afterlife. These perform rites only as a mark of respect for and commemoration of the dead. A very few refuse to observe death pollution or to perform funeral rites at all. One educated Nāyar, for example—a medical doctor—stated that on the deaths of his parents he would merely cremate their bodies and invite a few like-minded friends to a meal to commemorate them.

Analysis. Behind these changes lie several separable though related kinds of change in Nāyar social structure and culture. With regard to changes in the cults of dead kinsfolk, the collapse of the *taravād* as a legal and economic corporation is of major importance. With the loss of collective legal responsibility which this entails goes a loss of the sense of collective moral responsibility. Nāyars who are no longer legally responsible for one another, who no longer share land, a common house, and a common destiny, no longer think it probable that their misdemeanors can bring misfortune to each other.

The collapse of the *taravād* is also, of course, accompanied by a total change in the relationships between matrilineal kin. Mother's brothers whose property is divided from that of their nephews no longer have authority over them. Indeed, the mother's brother is now often absent in his wife's house when a child is growing up and exerts no discipline over him. In any case the change which takes place in matrilineal relationships after a modern division of property is very marked. One man whose *taravād*

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWII Kerala AWII
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[South Malabar and Cochin]

must be unrelated: if a man married an *enangar* woman, the *enangar* bond was broken and each lineage must find new, unrelated *enangar*. *Enangar* must be present to witness marriages, to help at funerals, and to represent their lineage's ancestral spirits in the ceremonial food-offerings to spirits on the sixteenth day after, or the anniversary of, a death. The prohibition on marriages between *enangar* acts as an insurance that the *enangar* should not be prejudiced by ties of matrilaterial or affinal kinship in their task of bringing to justice members of the linked lineage who offended against caste law. Among Nayars, this was less likely to happen because patrilateral ties were less strong than are matrilaterial ties among Tiyyars.

Cutting across their lineage-grouping, the Tiyyars had dispersed, exogamous matrilineal clans, comparable with the clans of the north. My informants knew nothing about these clans except that they were once exogamous. They are not so today, since some people do not remember their clan-names. Though the clans have died out, marriage is prohibited between known matrilineal kin.

The Tiyyars of this area had fraternal polyandry. In this they must be distinguished from the Nayars, since the Tiyyars banned non-fraternal polyandry, while the Nayars of Malabar and Cochin forbade the marriage of one woman to two men of the same lineage, not to mention the same sibling-group. Tiyyar fraternal polyandry died out about twenty years ago. To carry out this marriage, the horoscopes of the girl and the eldest potential husband were compared and the amount of the dowry of jewels and vessels fixed. The bridegrooms went to the girl's house with their kin and *enangar*. Their mother's brother handed clothing for the bride, together with the *kānam* sum as in Norther Malabar, to the mother's brother of the bride. A learned man sang a marriage formula to the effect that the girl of such a lineage was here given to the men of such a lineage, with caste-men and the sacred lamp as witness. He adjured the bridegroom's party to punish her reasonably when necessary, but to 'Keep her well, but if you are displeased with her, bring her back to us even if she has ten children, and we shall have her back, after settling the accounts in the presence of the third man [the go-between in marriage arrangements] and the *enangan*.' The bride was seated in the marriage hall at the end of a row beside her bridegrooms. The bridegroom's mother and other kinsfolk, and finally their *enangan* and his wife, fed the grooms and then the bride with porridge and with coconut-milk.

The marriage was consummated shortly afterwards in the bride's house, where each husband in order of age went to live with her for one or two weeks. At the end of the honeymoon period she was brought permanently to the husband's house, where she became her mother-in-law's subordinate. The husbands cohabited with her for equal periods in turn by the arrangement of their mother. Even a child might be married to the common wife by the milk-tie, and when he grew up claim conjugal rights in his much older wife. If the family were large and the wife weak in health, a second and even a third woman might, at least in modern times, be married by all the brothers and shared as their common wife. Children called all the fathers *appan*, prefacing distinguishing terms. Sons had equal rights of inheritance. The system mitigated against division of property, but, at least in modern times, if the family became large, brothers might, on the death of their fathers, divide the property and the children and each take one of the wives to live with him in middle life.

Divorce is permitted: a divorced wife returns to her brother's house, whence she may in theory be remarried. To effect a divorce, the eldest husband traditionally took a piece of thread from his loin-cloth, burnt it in two, and blew the two pieces away, saying to the brother of the girl, 'Here is your sister's *āchāram*.' *Achāram* commonly means 'custom', and Aiyappan (1944, p. 184), interprets the phrase, 'Hereby the "thread-tie" [formed by presenting a loin-cloth to the wife at marriage] is snapped, and with it my customary rights over this woman as her husband terminate.' The earnest money was returned to the husband's kin in the

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949) 1955 AWll Kerala AWll
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presence of *mangar*. The young children of a divorced woman might return with her to her brother's house, but had the right to go back before puberty to their fathers' house. 586

In this system the husbands obtain both sexual and procreative rights in their wife, her children becoming members of their patrilineal group. The wife herself does not, however, as among Brahmans, become wholly incorporated as a member of her husband's lineage. A sonless widow whose husband left no brothers had no rights to property or maintenance by his family; she must return to her brother's house. She could not, as among Brahmans, adopt on behalf of her husband or temporarily manage his property in the absence of adult kinsmen. Though her children belong to the husband's group, the wife appears as in North Malabar to be only temporarily 'leased' by the husbands, on payments of the *kānam* sum, for her sexual and domestic services. 595 613 851 [589] [581]

Moreover, though a woman cannot inherit property in her natal *taravād*, the bond between brother and sister remains strong. The eldest brother is early regarded as the guardian of his sisters, who observe partial avoidance and respect to him much as in a Nayar *taravād*. It is significant that at divorce, a woman is returned to her brother, not to her father or the headman of her patrilineal group. At the death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe pollution in their own dwelling-group, assembling at the deceased's conjugal house on the sixteenth day for final rites to the spirit. At the death of a man, his sisters' sons have pollution, assemble at his house, and in the sixteen days of mourning perform offerings to the spirit immediately after the deceased's sons, and before his younger brothers and paternal grandchildren. At the death of a man, his sisters and daughters make offerings to an image of the deceased on the fourteenth day, but the widow herself (unlike the Brahman widow) takes no part in death rites. This shows the strong tie persisting between a married woman and her natal group, and the comparative lack of integration into the group of the women who marry its men. The former existence of exogamous matrilineal clans underlines this persistence of the bond between women and their natal kinsfolk, especially their brothers.[1] 593 613 428 586 593 765 [782] 593

The Tiyyar Tāli-*Rite*. A girl's *tāli* was tied before puberty by a boy, usually a small child, of some local *taravād*, affinal or unrelated, into which the girl might marry. My informants in Cochin and Walluvanād could not remember the details of the rite, which has died out in the last twenty years. They knew that it must be done before puberty, and that the *tāli*-tier sometimes married the girl after puberty by the usual ceremonies. 588

According to Thurston & Rangachari (1909, VII, pp. 80–1), who describe the rite in Chavakkad, between Calicut and Cochin, Anantha Krishna Ayer (1909–12, I, pp. 285–7) who describes it for Cochin, and Aiyappan (1944, pp. 159–60) for the whole central area, the horoscopes were compared as for a marriage. The artisans provided an arrow and a brass mirror which the girl carried in her hand, a plank of the milk-tree, the rouge-bottle which figures in the eight auspicious objects, and a staff carried by the bridegroom. The local *Pānan* (a low caste of sorcerers and menial workers) brought a peacock-feather umbrella for the girl and a 'war umbrella' for the boy. A week in advance, the carpenter planted the south-east corner-post of the shed at an auspicious moment. For three days before the rites, the girl was secluded as if she had menstruated. On the day before the rites, she was taken to worship the sun, and was seated in the marriage-hall on a plank with a lit lamp, a vessel of water, rice, plantain-fruits, and a coconut before her. Her mother's brother's wife parted her hair and placed a gold coin on her crown, and the Tandan's wife (like the barber in North Malabar) anointed this three times with oil, here poured from a leaf of the *jak* tree. The girl took a ceremonial bath and was secluded in the house with a casket, a bell-metal mirror, and a sword on a stool beside her. [787] [564] [587]

[1] The tie between sisters is also close. They and their children observe pollution for each others' deaths, and the sororate (forbidden among Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars) sometimes confirms the status of the mother's sister as a proxy mother.

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll
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daughter never calls you by any name which, in the Hindu code of manners, is done only with regard to the husband. She is your *a priori* wife, if such an expression could be used. She is spoken of as the *Mura Penna* (*Mura* = customary, and *Penna* = female or wife, meaning customary wife). 582

Unlike other Hindus a Nāyar may marry a girl from a lower sub-caste as long as she also is a Nāyar. He cannot marry a woman whose caste is higher than his own without the wife losing her caste. A Nāyar lady can choose her husband either from among the allied families or others, provided they are of the same or superior sub-caste. Also, she can marry from anyone of the higher castes, i.e., either from the Brahmins or from the Kshatriyas. The alliance between the Malabar Brahmins and the Nāyars is a social fact of very great interest. In no other part of India is a Brahmin allowed to marry out of his own caste. In Malabar, on the other hand, among the Nambudiris or the Aryan immigrants, only the eldest member of the family can marry among the Brahmins, the others being forced to marry among the Nāyars. The permanence through ages of matrilineal descent among the Nāyars is due to this fact. The Brahmins, being of a superior caste, and the Nāyar wife of the Brahmin being unable to live in her husband's family, the system tended to be matrilineal as well as matrilocal. Also, since the children of such a marriage are Nāyars and not Brahmins, though the father is a Brahmin, the system remained wholly unilateral without any definite bilateral development. It is only the very highest among the Nāyars that have connection with the Brahmins. Through their influence the custom preserved all its strength in the lower classes as well. 582 564

The peculiar custom of the Malabar Brahmins of not allowing their junior members to marry among their own caste introduces a complication into the Nāyar system. The idea underlying such a prohibition is evidently the preservation of the big estates which the Nampudiris own. Since the Nāyar sons of the Malabar Brahmins do not inherit anything from their fathers, their estates remain undivided and descend only to the eldest son. Primogeniture has been the custom in every country where the preservation of big landed property in the hands of a few was aimed at. The undivided family among the Nāyars is also meant to conserve their possession of the land and maintain the political influence resulting from it. A point of utmost importance which should always be kept in mind in this connection is the interaction of economic and social forces. The interest of the Nampudiris to keep their property undivided led to their custom of primogeniture, and this again induced them to use their temporal power and sacerdotal influence to perpetuate the matrilineal system among the Nāyars. Also, the desire to preserve the family estates as a whole, kept the Nāyar families from being divided, making thereby a change to patrilineal system altogether impossible. 428 564 582

the Todas also *Mochuna* (or cross-cousin) marriage is the orthodox custom. See p. 512, Rivers, *The Todas*. Also Appendix, "Similarities between the Nāyars and the Todas." 582 171

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

like other conventionalities, is an accident, and the Nayar women are as chaste and faithful as their neighbours, just as they are as modest as their neighbours, although their national costume does not include some of the details required by conventional notions of modesty."[1] Nevertheless, the existing state of things in the community does not quite satisfy the sentiments of the educated public. There was a loud cry for reform and legislation in British Malabar. The Madras Government appointed a commission, which, after its protracted labours, enacted a permissive law, Act IV of 1896. The main provisions of the Bill are, that, when a *sambandham* has been registered, it shall have the incidence of a legal marriage; that is to say, the wife and children shall be entitled to maintenance by the husband or father respectively and to succeed to half his self-acquired property if he dies intestate, while the parties to such a *sambandham* cannot register a second one during its continuance. The law does not extend to this State. The fewness of the number of marriage registrations shows how little the Nayars, as a community, have availed themselves of it. The principal objections urged against it are: (1) that it ignores caste and customary restrictions on marriage and thereby interferes with caste; (2) that it sanctions what according to social usage is deemed to be incestuous marriage; (3) that marriage before the Registrar is obnoxious to the people, and that no one has any scruples about going through the customary form; (4) that the provisions relating to divorce are ill-adapted to the present state of society in Malabar, and that revelations of conjugal infidelity in public courts are the most repulsive to the people; (5) that the provisions relating to the giving of the whole of the self-acquired property to wives and children amount to violent interference with the customary law. The following extract from Moore's Malabar Law and Customs is well worth the perusal[2]:—

From the date on which the Act in Malabar came into force up to 31st March 1910, one hundred *sambandhams* have been registered. "In his last report of the working of the Act, the Registrar-General states, that the number of notices of

1. Logan's Manual of Malabar, Vol. I, page 136.
2. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 85.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
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and the Rajas were mostly guided by their own will and pleasure unless it ran counter to the customs of the country. Many of them had learned Brahmans to instruct them in the fundamental and long established laws of the country.

Certain checks upon their arbitrary power existed in the form of general assemblies of the nation, but these were seldom held. These were of two kinds: those assembled under the orders of the Raja, and those assembled by the spontaneous will of the people. In the former case, messengers, who by right of birth and descent were entitled to that office, were despatched in all directions to summon the people. When assembled, they sat in a circle in the open air, while a number of Nayars kept guard over them. The propositions were then discussed, and the measures proposed were rejected or adopted by the unanimous silence or clamour of those present, but in affairs of minor importance not affecting the welfare of the whole community, the chiefs of the nation were summoned, and they decided the questions laid before them.

The assemblies summoned by the will of the nation were conducted in much the same manner, but with more impetuosity. They were held only in cases of emergency, when the Raja was guilty of extreme tyranny or of gross violation of the law. Then all the landed proprietors were bidden to attend, and if any one dared to refuse to obey the summons, the assembly sentenced his houses, gardens or estates to be devastated. If he persisted in his disobedience, he would be deprived of his privileges and votes, and might even be sentenced to banishment. As the object of such assemblies was to thwart the will of the ruler, he on his side did all he could to obstruct their holding such assemblies. The Raja had no right nor power to prevent them by force of arms, but he sent *Pandara Patti* (servants of the rulers) to provoke them with all manner of annoyances and to pelt them with stones, sand, and dirt. The Nayars on guard did their best to keep off the assailants with their shields, and, if any one of them, provoked beyond endurance, were to strike or hurt one of the youths, it would be regarded as treason, and, as such, the assembly would be liable to a heavy fine and would be deprived of its inviolability. The Raja might then disperse them by force of arms; but if he failed to subdue them, they would all desert their allegiance. Allies and neighbours did their best to intercede between the parties and to secure for everyone his proper

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
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or if he ate and drank in the house of a low caste-man or spoke ill of the king, and if any one of these were established in his own words, the king would call three or four honorable gentlemen and have him put to death. After he was dead, they laid him on his back, to place the king's warrant on his breast. If he was left dead in the country, the dead was so exposed as a prey to vultures and dogs. If he was put to death in the city, the dead body was allowed to be removed either as a mark of favour, or on payment of fine, by the citizens with the king's permission. If, on the other hand, he commits any other offence, he would be dealt with in the same way as any criminal already described."

Cruel as the administration of justice might appear to be in ancient times, many early writers bear testimony to the fact that private property was as secure in the fourteenth century as it is to-day, and that security and justice were firmly established in the land. Varthema was impressed with the honesty of the inhabitants; and the favourable testimony of the previous writers was confirmed by Pyrard-De-Laval, a Frenchman, who remarked that justice was well administered and awarded gratuitously. These systems have been completely forgotten and given place to the institution of regular courts, where justice is administered in accordance with the principles of British jurisprudence.

Feudalism in the Cochin State.

From the earliest times, even perhaps before the Aryan immigration, there appears to have been a complete military organisation among the Sudras of Malabar. The country was divided into *Nádu*, or principalities, and the smallest territorial unit in it was a *Désam* (or village) presided over by a *Désavázhi* (ruler of a *Désam*). Each of the *Désams* and *Nádu* was designated by the allotted quota of Nayars it was required to put into the field. The names of these divisions, even after the long lapse of time, have not been forgotten. The authority of the chiefs of these military divisions, large and small, was hereditary in their respective families and they had appropriate titles of distinction. They were not always in attendance on the Raja's person. If not required on particular State duties or religious services, they were called out for offensive or defensive warfare.

A chief was not considered a *Náduvázhi* (ruler of a *Nádu*), who had not at least a hundred soldiers attached to him, and one with less than that number was called a Desa vázhi.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

made even of gold or silver and consecrated for worship in Brahman houses. They are also presented to Brahmans by those on whose date of birth an eclipse falls, and this is done to mitigate the wrath of Ráhu.

Cases of snake bite are of frequent occurrence in the northern parts of the State where snakes abound; and nowhere else is the Hindu treatment so skillfully practised as to effect a radical cure by medicines and incantations. When information regarding snake bite isconveyed to a physician, or a bitten man is taken to him, the latter can, by the chirping of a lizard or other tokens, make out the nature of the case and also whether it is curable or not. It is said that physicians should not go to a patient's house, and the following story is given in explanation :—

Once when the emperor Parikshit was ordained to be bitten by the great serpent Takshaka, the latter set out in the disguise of a Brahman. On his way he met another Brahman, who, on enquiry, turned out to be a physician on his way to cure the king. With a view to test his ability, Takshaka bit a tree which was at once reduced to ashes, but the physician removed the poison, and the tree regained its former state. Takshaka, admiring his ability, loaded him with immense wealth and dissuaded him from going to the king. He also made him promise that he should never volunteer his services in such matters unless patients were taken to him. In some families the profession is hereditary, the most prominent among them beingt he families of Kokkára Nambuthiri and Máliyakal Karta.

Tutelary deities.

In every village are to be found guardian deities that protect the villagers from the malevolence of demons which are supposed to occupy an intermediate place between gods and men. The temples of the Nayars in which are enshrined these village deities or *Grámadévatas* are far less imposing than those of the Brahmans and are callad *kávus*. The deities commonly represented are the consort of Siva or some manifestation of that female divinity, and Ayyappan or Sasta; and these are supposed to keep in subjection the demons and spirits which are ever prone to do harm to the people of the village. Thus, though the demons are objects of worship, the propitiation of the guardian deities and the festivals held in their honour are considered to be sufficient to curb

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWII Kerala AWII

Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected parent, or towards the higher casteman, was always shown in Kerala by not wearing anything in his presence above the waist, be one man or woman. Basically, this has changed but little, the Nambudri Brahmin always praying in his private temple with only a loin cloth on, the modern Tiya factory girl now removing the blouse which she has taken to wearing before some important personage of her kin group, so that her breasts are exposed. What is a less frequent sight nowadays is Nayar, Tiya or Kammalan women in the streets and on the roads without some covering over the upper parts of their bodies. Lower caste people, however, Cherumas, Pulayas and aboriginals, being less affected by progress, are still to be seen on the highways, their shapely bodies exposed from the waist upwards.

A striking phenomenon in Kerala is the coexistence, even today, of the two radically opposed systems of *marumakkathayam* (matriliny) and of *makkathayam* (patriliny). In the first, children are born into their mother's caste, while in the other they are born into their father's caste. Inheritance is through the mother's brother in the first instance, and through the father in the second. The matrilineal people are grouped in matrilineal clans called *tarawads*, of which the senior male member, the *karanavan*, is the recognized head; the patrilineal people have patrilineal clans called by the same name, *tarawad*, also with the senior male as the *karanavan*, but at the same time, they observe descent through the mother, and all are members of matrilineal descent groups known as *illams* or *kiriyams*. While castes and, strictly speaking, subcastes are in principle endogamous, clans and lineages are definitely exogamous, marriage being matrilocal in the case of matrilineal people and patrilocal in the case of patrilineal people.[1]

Of the high castes, only the Nambudri Brahmins are *makkathayam*. They have patrilineal *gothras* or lineages which are exogamous, and patrilineal clans like *tarawads* which they, however, call *illams*. In olden days, only the eldest son could contract a regular marriage within his caste, marriage being polygamous and patrilocal. The younger sons were either expected to live as *brahmacharyas* (bachelor religious devotees) or could cohabit with Nayar women in a form of union known as *sambandham* to which we shall revert in a moment. They were maintained by their own efforts (they generally became cooks) and by a meagre allowance from the family *illam*. This has now been changed by

[1] I continue to make use of the terms *matrilocal* and *patrilocal* here, rather than *uxorilocal* and *virilocal* as still being perfectly adequate as they were for Ceylon previously.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll

the Nambudri Act of 1933, the provisions of which are that younger Nambudris may marry women of their own caste and that the *illam* property can be divided, if they so wish, and inherited by these younger sons.

Others who observe *makkathayam* in Kerala are the south Malabar and north Cochin Thandans, the Kammalans and their associated fellow artisans and craftsmen, all the agrarian serfs and the aboriginals, the south Malabar Moslem Moplas, the Christians and the Jews.

Marumakkathayam, on the other hand, is practised by Kshattriyas, Samantans, Ambalavasis, Nayars, north Malabar Tiyas, south Travancore Iruvas and north Malabar as well as Laccadive Moplas. In the case of the Mohammedans, a distinction should be made in matters of inheritance, family property (that is of the *tarawad*) being handed on through the female line alone, while self-acquisitions of the father are passed on directly to his male heirs. A visit to the Makhdun Tangal of Ponani, the senior Islamic religious authority in Kerala, which I made on the 24th of November, 1949, allowed me to confirm this. Originally from the Hedjaz, Sayed Mohammed Ben Mustafa Haidaros told me that this was an adaptation of Koranic law to the customs of the country and had been introduced many years back with the coming of his ancestors to the south-west coast of India.

Marriage in Kerala is an arranged affair, parents or a close relative such as the maternal uncle, choosing a suitable partner for the child after the age of puberty. Once the two families involved have agreed as to what shall be paid in bride price and in dowry, the wedding is celebrated publicly with religious rites and with an appropriate display of festive spending. This is the general rule insofar as marriage within the caste is concerned. Intercaste relations are, however, far from rare, and their existence has been regularized and institutionalized in a form of sexual union, mentioned above, and known as *sambandham*.

By this arrangement, which appears to conform to a general principle of hypergamy in Kerala, men of a higher caste are permitted to consort with women of a lower one, without incurring any of the obligations towards wife and children which they would have if they had been regularly wed. Greatly facilitating this is the fact that *sambandham* unions usually take place with women of those people who follow *marumakkathayam*, for in this way, the offspring which they may have will belong to their caste and are cared for by and inherit from the maternal uncle.

Sambandham used to be the usual way in which younger Nambudri sons enjoyed the privilege of taking Nayar women to themselves and

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll

having children by them. The latter were born into the Nayar caste, and to all practical purposes were untouchables for their fathers. But, in fact, Nayars thus procreated were perfectly conscious of the high caste blood which flowed in their veins and which made them only slightly less important than their exalted sires. A feeling of close relation to the Brahmins was thus definitely generated in them, giving them the self-assurance and self-assertion in public affairs that distinguishes them from their fellow Indians to this day. Others, and especially Arabs, have also contracted *sambandham* unions with the Nayar women of Malabar. Such unions are equally possible with *marumakkathayam* Tiya women, and between members of the same endogamous caste, when regular marriage is not possible.

Although it appears to be a very loose way of setting up a household (there is no other ceremony than the possible offering of a piece of cloth by the man to the woman, and the relation can be broken off informally at any time), in actual fact there were, and still are, very few cases of *sambandham* unions not lasting. The main drawback seems to have been the feeling of frustration in the male partner that he was unable to do anything for, or leave anything to, his children. British legislation attempted to remedy this state of affairs by the Malabar Marriage Act IV of 1896 which provided for such unions to be registered and stipulated that when they were, they would be looked upon as regular, legal marriages entitling the "wife" and children to maintenance by the "husband" and father, and to inheritance of half his self-acquired property should he die intestate. Inheritance from father to son in matrilineal families has since been further legalized by the Madras *Marumakkathayam* Act of 1933, but its provisions really apply more specifically to the regular marriages of the *marumakkathayam* practising people. In accordance with them, the property of the *tarawads* can now be divided up between the members, if they so wish.

A specific custom of Kerala, which has never failed to intrigue outsiders, is still very much observed today, namely the ceremony of *tali-kettu-kalyanam*, or of the tying of the *tali*. The latter is a small piece of gold, through which a thread has been strung, and which is tied round the neck of a girl before she attains maturity. Speculation as to what is the significance, origin and function of this ritual has been rife over the years, but at least opinions do not seem to differ on the point that it represents some form of symbolic marriage, preceding and perhaps preparing the way for a real one, or for entry into a *sambandham* union.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Nayars

*595 I was in that town for only a very short time. I shall begin by giving a description of the little remaining Nayar polyandry that I was able to find.

114 *595 Research, in this case, was the very opposite of easy. When I was in Ottappalam of the Walluvanad taluk in 1949, and had made that town the centre of my activities, all the influential local Nayars, most of them *wakils* or lawyers, got together and, threatening the severest punishments if anyone disobeyed them, decided that none of their caste would give me any information at all regarding their alleged polyandry. The town is one from which many of the most prominent Nayars in Government service in New Delhi today have originally come, and in which members of their *tarawads* and immediate families still live. It is therefore understandable that they should have taken this line, it being considered by them today that any hint of their being polyandrous is insulting and degrading. Later, I heard that I had been accused in the Indian capital of stating that Nayars were descendants of the most primitive aboriginals. There was, naturally, absolutely no truth in this, but it is easy to see how the rumour originated.

*595 [351] On the 28th of August, 1939, I went to a Nayar household which I have marked down in my notes as bearing the name of Tsingepuram Kailott. It was in the outskirts of Tellicherry, a large house in a garden compound, with a smaller building some distance away from it. There I met a man called Apunayar and his brother Kamarnayar, and the latter who seemed to be the most talkative, told me through my interpreter that he was the youngest of the two, while his brother, the other man, was the eldest of the whole family. There were four brothers, he explained, the two other ones, junior to this pair, lived in the smaller house in the compound: their names were Kunjiramanayar and Narayannayar. Their mother, Amalu of Tsingepuram kailott *tarawad* had recently died. She had been polyandrous, and the four brothers and a daughter who was also dead now had been born and brought up in the big house by their maternal uncles. The latter had died before their mother, and they had inherited the property. They had given up polyandry and now lived each of them with a wife. Households had been split, and the younger brothers had built themselves the smaller house in the garden, and lived there with their respective wives, while the two elder men had remained in the ancestral mansion. Apunayar had four children, two boys and two girls, Karanayar one girl, while in the smaller household, there were only a little boy and a little girl, both the children of Narayannayar.

●[428]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Thandans
Tiyas

* 595 601 could get Panju to say at first was that she "did not look after us enough". However, when I insisted, I heard that she did not satisfy them sexually, which again might be either that Ramon got the lion's share of the marriage or that the two younger men did not find their elder brother's wife very attractive. Anyhow, they asked their maternal uncle (their father had died in the meantime) to find them another wife. After a show of resistance in which he said that it was not right and that they should remain with Kuniyama as tradition dictated, their mother's brother again gave in and got Nani for them; they married her when they were twenty and fifteen respectively. They were now forty and thirty five, and their common wife was thirty five. They had put up a separate household, to leave Raman and Sankara in the main building, and theirs was the smaller house on the other side of the yard, wholly within the same compound, however, so that the *tarawad* property was not completely torn asunder.

● 428 The land upon which the family lived was theirs, and not rented. After the death of their father, their mother inherited it, and when she died, it was divided up between the sons. Mayadi was also gone, but Raman junior, his son, and the four surviving brothers, Raman senior, Sankara, Panju and Narayana, each received one fifth of the whole. There was a meeting in the big house, they told me, about a year after the death of their mother (they presumably inherited the property undivided until then), and it took them three days to come to an agreement. Influential neighbours, the elders of the *tarawad* and the two brothers-in-law, Kunyadi and Maniken, also attended. The whole property, paddy fields, cattle, grain and seeds, agricultural tools, implements, the house and the household requisites and furniture, was evaluated in money and divided into five equal shares. Panju and Narayana did not split their shares; they kept the two fifths they received undivided, as they constituted a polyandrous household. The women did not inherit anything because they had been married off to others. Women among the Thandans can inherit from their parents, I heard, if there are no male heirs.

* [595] * 595 [407] On the 27th of October 1949, I visited a Tiya (Thiyya) polyandrous family at Kadevelur in Tallapilli taluk of north Cochin. These people were *kanam* tenants of a Nambudri Brahmin, to whom they paid thirty rupees a year in rent, plus eight hundred measures of rice per crop.[1]

[804] [1] I was told eight hundred *parahs*, but this is hardly possible as: 1 Cochin *parah* = 10 *edangalis* = 40 *nalis* = 1,720 *tolas*; as 42½ Cochin *tolas* = 1 lb., 1 Cochin *parah* = c. 40½ lbs. Eight hundred *parahs* would then = 40½ × 800 = 32,400 lbs. The measure may have been a smaller one, an *edangali* or even a *nali*.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Tiyas

well as the unmarried women and girls lived in the house. The women who had married out had left and were living with the families of their husbands. What struck me was the considerable number of unmarried boys and girls relatively advanced in age who were still at home. Tiyas, I was told, marry late, usually after puberty, which is exceptional in India.

It will be noticed that polyandry was only practised in the elder generations. Not a single case occurs among the younger people. The reason for this is that the Thiyya Makkathayam Act of 1940 made polyandry illegal in Cochin, and nobody was thus at liberty to marry in this way any longer. Property, which was undivided so far, would be divided, Velu told us, when he and his brothers and his wife had died. This was in accordance with the new legislation, and all the children, girls included, would have a share. The boys, however, would be allotted double portions. Thus for their children by the two marriages, if the girls were not married by then, there would be thirteen shares, of which the boys would get the four first.

Velu assured me that formerly they were polyandrous in his caste so that the property should not be divided up. It kept the brothers together, they did not get involved in the quarrels of their wives, it was not necessary to split up into separate families, and thus was a very good system. Times, however, had changed, he said and now because there was a law forbidding polyandry, there was no longer any reason to keep what they owned undivided. He seemed to think that the old way of doing things had its advantages, especially in the possibility of bringing in another woman, if this were desirable and the brothers agreed to it (as he and his younger brothers had done), without being obliged to separate and start splinter households as had now become necessary. When I questioned him as to how they would keep going now that the economy of an undivided polyandrous household was no longer possible, he replied that it would oblige them to turn coolies, cut laterite, plough for others, carry on petty trade and emigrate to the towns.

On the 2nd of November 1949, I went again to Cochin accompanied by an interpreter. We drove into the Tallapilli taluk of the northern part of that state, and visited a village near Kunnamkulam, called Perumpillav (big jack fruit tree). The people living here called themselves "Ezhuvas", but, in accordance with recent Cochin legislation, they were assimilated to Tiyas or Thiyyas as the local spelling has it. (Article 5, paragraph i of the Thiyya *Makkathayam* Act of 1940 states that "Thiyya included *Ezhuva*, Chova, Billava, Marayan, Thandan and others recognized as such.")

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Tiyas

regulation. They said that they were starving and that they had had nothing to eat that morning. When I asked them how they would solve their problem, they replied that it was better that I "did not ask". Evil times had befallen them in their old age, and they really did not know what they could do about it; they might hire themselves out as labourers, if they were not so old and feeble. They agreed with me that the increase in population in Kerala over the years had made the difficulty of feeding so many people increasingly great.

Their two elder sons, called Ayapakuti and Pangha, lived polyandrously, I heard, some few miles away, on a bit of land which their fathers had given them fourteen years ago, in the fifth year of their marriage and after the birth of their fourth child. The common wife, Paru, was now alone with the thirty five year old second son, as the elder had died two years ago, also at the age of thirty five. It seemed that Kandapan had originally been part of the polyandrous household but that, tiring of living in this way, he had found a wife for himself, Lakshmi, with whom he had returned to the parental house to live, after the last renewal of the lease, four years ago.

With the old folk and Kandapan's family, was also Kunyu, a daughter, twenty five years old and divorced ten years ago. She had been married at the age of fourteen to Velahu, a man eighteen years her senior. She was childless and had not remarried. She lived in the larger house with her parents.

I took photographs of the family and a group picture of them can be seen in Fig. 10. I also made their genealogy, which is attached herewith in Table 6. I stayed on and discussed various problems with these people for part of the afternoon (having provided for them to have lunch in the meantime, which was most welcome to them in their starved condition). They told me that even if polyandry was now prohibited since the Act passed in 1940, it had been dying out for some years in any case. The legislation – of which they really had no idea at all – was only the confirmation and the consecration of a *de facto* state of affairs. Concerning the inheritance of girls in Tiya families, I may mention that, since the passing of the Act, property would have to be divided. Girls would also get their share which would be half that of the boys; they would pass it on to their own children and, since they were *makkathayam*, it would become merged with that of the latter's fathers. If there were no boys and only girls in the household, its property would cease to exist after the girls had been married off, for each of them would take her part away in accordance with the above.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Kammalans

kiriyam; in that matrilineal descent group they limit themselves to not marrying those of their acquaintances whom they know belong to it. The sub-caste is also endogamous, carpenter only marrying "carpentress", and never a *Puri-asari*. Normally boys alone can inherit the property, but if there are no male heirs, the girls, even if they are married, will inherit equal shares.

The members of the Perinkulam household were subtenants of a Nayar tenant called Mutad Achutah Nayar, himself the *verumpattamdar* of a Nayar *janmi* from Kavalappaia near Shoranur called Kavalappaia Mupil Nayar. As *kudiyiruppu* tenants of the site where the house was built, they paid a yearly rent of only one rupee.

On the 17th of November, 1949, I visited the house of a member of the fourth and last sub-caste of the Kammalans, the *Musari* (often pronounced *Mushari*), bell-metal (an alloy of lead and brass) smiths or braziers. It was near Lakkidi in the Walluvanad taluk, one furlong north of the main road, and to reach it, my interpreters and I followed a very attractive path, sunk deep between high banks of earth and overshadowed with coconut and arecanut palm trees.

We arrived at a miserable house, standing in a grove of palms and plantains, a red laterite courtyard in front, in which could be seen some stone moulds in grooves – no doubt the foundry. There was nobody about, but when we called out, a little girl (whom we later heard was called Menakhi) appeared and said that she would go and fetch her father. He arrived soon afterwards, a big, strong man, fifty years old, called Krishnan. He wore his hair over his forehead in the typical Malayalam top knot, and he had a very ugly face.

The name of the household, he told us, was Puawutterparamba and it belonged to the Chelamanaparamba *tarawad*. Our informant was the youngest brother of three, and there was a sister called Kali, aged forty nine, about whom, however, he could tell us nothing at all. The whole family used to live, it seemed, at a place called Nedungothani, near Palappuram. That was their village, he said. But then, the elder brother, Konnan, now sixty five years old, had got married some thirty years ago to a woman named Sita whom he had met while "roaming about". He had married late as a result of this proclivity for wandering away from home, and, with his bride, aged fifty today (Krishnan could not tell us the name of her *tarawad*), he had moved to Wallancheri, near Kutipuram, Pattambi, because he had found business bad in Nedungothani. He was still living in Wallancheri and had five children, of whom four were married, the two daughters away to men of other vil-

1 [i.e. in the carpenter Sub-caste of the Kammalans -- Analyst]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Kammalahs

lages. Here again, the informant was unable to give us *tarawad* names, and indeed this was most characteristic of the whole interview. He gave village names instead, saying that they used these now in his caste.

After Konnan had left, their father and their mother's brother got Kunyikai, his elder brother aged sixty two today, and himself married to Kunyu, a young girl fifteen years old at the time, from the Kerikell *tarawad* in Cochin state, resident very close to Lakkidi on the other side of the Ponani river, only about a mile away. That was twenty five years ago, and Kunyu was now forty years old. Very soon, Kunyikai found it impossible to live in this polyandrous atmosphere (Krishnan would give no details), and asked their maternal uncle to get him another wife. Their father had died in the meantime, and their mother's brother was thus the only person who could do this for him. He found Chiru for Kunyikai, and they were wed two years after the former marriage.

All the members of the family never lived together, however, because as soon as the wedding had taken place, Krishnan and the former common wife, took their part of the property (which was not much) and moved to this place near Lakkidi, where they established themselves. They chose it because it was so close to the wife's relatives. All the children they now had were Krishnan's, as Kunyu did not have any for five years after the polyandrous marriage. Krishnan, the eldest boy, now twenty, was born three years after the shift of residence. Kunyikai stayed behind in the family home, and was still there at the time of the interview. He had one boy called Kunju, aged twelve. Of the children of Krishnan and Kunyu, only the second, a daughter called Kalyany, and aged eighteen, was married. She became the wife of two brothers, Raman and Chami, of Ambalapara village, at the age of fifteen. She had one child, a boy called Paru, one year old. The genealogy which I established from this information is given in Table 14.

I was very surprised to find the informant so ignorant of the *tarawad* names – although he did know that of his own *tarawad*. He assured me that village names had now taken their place and that, in his caste, they observed what might be called "village exogamy". Did this mean that the bellmetal smith's patrilineal clans coincided with topographical units such as villages? There was, it seemed to me, a possibility of this being so, although I could get no confirmation of the hypothesis from anybody, not even from my interpreters and guides. The *Musari* observed exogamy also in their *kiriyams*, Krishnan said, although, as in the case of other castes which I have previously described, they only did so for those of the group whom they knew. Inheritance was *makkathayam*,

[TEXT Continues on P. 204]

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Kammalans
Kolla-kurups

and boys had preference over girls in this matter, but the latter could inherit if there were no male heirs.

The plot of land upon which the house was built was leased to the family as a sort of *kudiyiruppu*. It cannot be called a fully orthodox one, since Krishnan said that he had paid fifty rupees to the former resident, a coolie of the Ertachan caste (low caste Nayar), twenty three years ago when he took over from him, and another fifty rupees to the *janmi*, a Nambudri Brahmin called Manjalata Nambudri. Since then, rent had been fixed at eight annas and six pies a year, but he had not paid it for the last two years, he said, because nobody had asked him to do so! He made his living all right as a brazier, although it was not a very lucrative profession.

Having been to polyandrous families of the four sub-castes of the Kammalans, I next went on to investigate the polyandry of their associated artisan sub-castes, of which six were reliably reported to practise it. I began with the *Kolla-kurups* or shampooers, masseurs and leather shield makers. To these are assimilated also the *Vil-kurups* or bow makers, but I did not have the opportunity to see any. There are a subdivision of the main sub-caste, on the basis of speciality, as the *Puri-asari* are of the regular *Asari*.

On the 20th of November, 1949, I went to the house of a *Kolla-kurup* near Palappuram. This town is on the main Shoranur-Palghat road, east of Ottappalam, just before reaching the cross-roads of Lakkidi. We left the car on the highway, and proceeded on foot to the south of it, along a narrow, winding path which took us past luscious, green paddy fields lined with coconut trees, to a largish house, built of clay and laterite but thatched in the usual way, standing on an elevated piece of ground, like a platform. There was a gate to pass through, and as we went in we saw members of the family sitting about on a kind of rough, dried-clay verandah running round the walls of the building.

There were quite a lot of them, and they were all very gay and noisy. They started singing at the sight of us, and, laughing and shouting, made a considerable fuss of us. The contrast to the rather dismal atmosphere of the other houses that we had visited was very marked. After my guides and interpreters had somewhat quietened the children, we managed to speak to a man called Shankaran, aged thirty six, who was the eldest living male member of the family's second generation. With him were his wife and children, as well as his twenty five year old sister, Kalyany. None of the people wore anything from the waist upwards, and only a piece of cotton cloth covered the lower part of their bodies.

[Text continues on P. 206]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Kolla-kurups

The name of the household was Palappuram *Kalarikel*. Intrigued that it should have the same name as the neighbouring town, and that a new word instead of *tarawad* should be used, I enquired how this had come about. I was told that the *Kolla-kurups* did not have patrilineal clans of the usual Kerala pattern because they were too few and far apart; instead, they used the name *kalarikel*, which is that of a Nayar armoury for training soldiers, or a "gymnasium". This is in accordance with their profession as masseurs, and in order to distinguish them from each other, they qualified them with the name of the town or village in which they were situated. Otherwise, the same rules of marriage as in the rest of the artisan caste were enforced: the *kalarikels* were patrilineal and exogamous, and inheritance was *makkathayam*. There were also *kiriyams* or matrilineal descent groups in which exogamy was observed; Shankaran was even able to give me the name of his, Pal, which meant "white", he told me. I was struck by the resemblance between the *kalarikel* system of the *Kolla-kurups* and that of the "villages" of the *Musaris* whom I had encountered three days before (see p. 202). It was as though this instance of something different from the more usual *tarawads* had acted as a transition between these and the *kalarikels* of the *Kurups* today.

I made the family's genealogy, which is given here in Table 15. Shankaran had had two fathers, Raman and Karapan, both dead now, aged fifty four and forty two respectively. His mother was called Kunji, and was still alive, aged seventy. His fathers had had a sister, who died when she was thirty, called Paru and who had married a certain Krishnan of another *kalarikel*, at Malleshamangalam. There had been no issue from the marriage. Of his own generation, only he himself and his sister, Kalyany, were still alive. His eldest sister, Kunyiama, who had been married to two brothers, Kutan and Shanghuni of a *kalarikel* at Paratipullivil, had died when she was forty; her offspring included two boys, one of whom was married, and a girl, married polyandrously to two brothers, Balan and Bhaskar of Chunangad *kalarikel*. Kalyany had two husbands also, Kunyuni and Velu, but I did not manage to record these men's *kalarikel*. (I took a photograph of Kalyany standing at the entrance gate of the compound, with the paddy fields at the back, and another one of the family sitting round Kunji, the informant's twelve year old daughter, and listening to her singing a song; see Figs. 11 and 13.)

The house in which they all lived (except Kalyany who was only here on a visit to her brother, and lived elsewhere with her husbands), stood on land belonging to a *janmi* called Kollapuri Nayar. They did not pay

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Kanisans
Manans

564 614 siums" too – for what reason, I could not find out; I could see no relation between astrology and a gymnasium. Like the *Kolla-kurups*, they also had *kiriyams* which were exogamous as the *kalarikels* were; the informant's matrilineal clan was called Manga. Inheritance was *makkathayam*.

595 601 The family living in the house here, was divided into two sections. The first, of which Ramankuti was the eldest, consisted of himself and his brother, Ticheri, three years younger than him. Their father, who was now dead, had successively had two wives, Lakshmi and Kalyany, both of them still alive and living in the house; the first section was descendant from the first wife, while the other was issued from the second. Kalyany had had six children, of which, Paru, aged thirty, was the eldest; there were four brothers, Pachu, Shanghuni, Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan, and a younger daughter called Nani, aged twelve. The interesting part of the organization was that the two sections had both contracted polyandrous marriages: Ramankuti and Ticheri with one wife, Madhevi aged twenty eight: their four half brothers with Devaki, twenty three years old. Both women were from other *kalarikels*, the first from Kangal and the other from Kavalapara. They all lived in the same house, however, with Nani, only Paru having married Krishnan of Kutiparli *kalarikel* and having gone off to live with him. Paru had three children with Krishnan, as did Madhevi with the informant and his brother. The four brothers had only one little daughter, aged one year, with Devaki. The genealogy, as it was dictated to me, is given in Table 16.

Ramankuti told me that he and Pachu were the fully-fledged astrologers of the family. Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan were studying the art. Ticheri did odd jobs as a labourer, and Shanghuni was employed as a workman in the local match factory. The house that they all lived in was rented on a *kudiviruppu* lease for which they paid eight annas a year to the *janmi* of the land upon which it stood, a Nambudri Brahmin called Totapai Mana Nilakanda Nambudripad.

564 296 305 535 On the 22nd of November, 1949, I went to Lakkidi to visit the house of a *Manan*. These people are washermen and barbers, and they play an important role in Kerala as it is they and they alone who can wash the polluted clothes of menstruating Nambudri Brahmin and Nayar women. But they are also dancers in the temple on festive occasions.

361 351 We found the house for which we were looking, in the actual village of Lakkidi, in the vicinity of the railway station, near the river. It was a moderately large, well-to-do building, standing isolated in a large compound, in which clothes had been laid out to dry on the ground.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 210]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Manans
Panans

first moved to Mangode village, where Kali came from, for eleven years. Today they were living at Managhat, where Erechen had found it easier to get work.

As Kunji, my aged informant, was getting tired, we now took on Krishnan, son of the late Krishnan by his second wife, Kunji (the repetition of the same names in a family in Kerala is very confusing). He helped us to check all this material and to correct some inaccuracies which had crept in. I noticed that in some cases it was impossible to obtain the name of the *tarawad*, and that the name of the village would be given instead. There were, however, no *kalarikels* with the Manans, I was told. The patrilineal clans were exogamous, as were also the matrilineal *kiriyams* of these people, although they were not very well known and practically neglected in present-day marriages. Inheritance was *makkathayam*, as expected, but I could get no confirmation of the reported four endogamous subdivisions described in the *Gazeteer of the Malabar and Anjengo Districts*, p. 130 (see Bibliography).

This Manan family was living on ground belonging to a Nambudri Brahmin *janmi* called Mangala Mana C.M.C. Narayana Nambudripad, but they did not pay him any rent. They were there more as his employees and, in exchange for dwelling space, rendered him the invaluable services which he needed from them as washermen and barbers.

In the afternoon of the same day of the 25th of November, 1949, upon which I had visited a Thandan household (see above, p. 189), I went to Palappuram to see the family of a *Panan* (exorcist and leaf umbrella maker).

They lived in a poor but neat and cleanly house, situated in a rather thickly overgrown grove of the usual Kerala vegetation. On the verandah of the modest building of dried cow-dung and mud, a bare breasted woman, Sita, aged forty five, and three boys awaited us. She received us nicely and spoke quite readily. She seemed resigned to her poverty and conditions and only complained to us that she was not able to give the boys more and proper food.

She told us that she lived with the surviving husband of a once polyandrous union, in which she had been married when she was eighteen to two brothers, Panju, who had died two years after the wedding, at twenty one, and Korappan, her present forty four year old husband. She had had a daughter, Kunji, within the first year of her marriage, and four boys afterwards with Korappan. All the children, including the twenty six year old eldest girl, were unmarried; she was still breastfeeding the youngest, two and a half year old Kumaran. This, as I

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Panans

853 could see, was obviously a way of circumventing the difficulty of adequate nourishment, something to which a great majority of the mothers in the vast multitudes of Asia habitually resort.

*595 [868] [126] Father Korappan was away working, and he had taken twelve year old Krishna with him as an apprentice, so I was not able to photograph the whole family. But I obtained a picture of Sita with Kumaran at her breast and Chami and Narayan sitting next to her, which I give here in Fig. 15. The genealogy is in Table 18.

564 614 [428] Where *tarawads* were not known, Sita gave me the name of the village. From what she told me, the clans were patrilineal, inheritance was *makkathayam*, and exogamy was the rule, also in the *kiriyams*. Her husband's matrilineal descent group was called Walleananad. The house

*595 [429] was leased as a *kudiyiruppu* for which they paid a yearly rent of twelve annas to the *janmi*, Eranur Mana Narayan Nambudripad. They had been fifteen years at this place, and had come from about a furlong away where they used to reside before. This awakened my curiosity, and I enquired how this had happened.

Sita told me that her husbands originally lived in the other house, because it was the *tarawad's* headquarters. The name Kundilpadam which it bore meant "low field", and Vellarkaden which was the name of their present house, was just the appellation by which their new dwelling was known. Her husbands' father was the youngest of a pair of brothers, and they had both taken wives to themselves and had not lived in polyandry. Their offspring, her husbands and their father's elder brother's children, had continued to live together, and they, Panju and Korappan, had married first, twenty seven years ago. Then, twelve years later, the cousins had also got married, and, in order to make place for them, Sita and her surviving husband, Korappan, being the junior members, had moved away to another residence, the one where they lived at present.

[601] I made the genealogy of the neighbouring household as the informant gave it to me. It is shown here in Table 19. Two brothers, Panju and Raman, respectively aged forty six and forty, lived polyandrously with a common wife called Cherona, thirty three years old. They had four children, of whom none were married, since they were still too young.

361 On the 21st of November, 1949, I went to Palarmanpalam, a cluster of houses on the road between Ottappalam and the Lakkidi railway station, about a mile before the latter is reached. The object of our

564 959 971 visit was to see a *Pulluvan* household, that is of herbalists and *nag* snake worshippers, a sub-caste associated to the artisans.

[Text continues on p. 214]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Pulluvans

* 595 [361] We found the house, which was a small one, in a grove of plantains, surrounded by tapioca fields. A man named Komon, aged twenty nine, met us and took us onto the neat verandah of the building which was constructed in the usual Kerala style. He told us that the name of his household was Putanpunakkil, meaning "new house", and I made out the genealogy of his family, as shown here in Table 20.

*595 601 His elder brother, Raman, aged thirty three, had died recently, he said. He had had two younger sisters too, Chimdevi and Narayani, both of whom were also dead, the eldest at fifteen and the youngest at twelve. He and his elder brother had been married first polyandrously to a woman called Kalyany, for four years. Their father had found her for them, from the village of Churumudacheri. They had had a daughter by her, Ittiyadi, who was now eleven.

Kalyany, it seemed, had never really settled down in polyandry, and had always said that she did not like having two husbands. She wanted to stay alone with the eldest, Raman, but the latter did not accept. As he persisted in this attitude, in spite of her insistence that she have him all to herself, she eventually ran away, back to her parents' home, leaving the daughter with the brothers. That was seven years ago, and their father had immediately provided them with another wife, Kunji, from Manar village. She was twenty at the time, and had been married earlier, at the age of fourteen, to two brothers, Velu and Aiyappan of Tirumatankodu village. She did not get on with these two men and wanted to leave them. When Komon's father chose her for him and his brother, she left her married home, and the men, quite exceptionally, allowed her to take away the boy they had had with her, called Paramesuram and who was now aged ten. Kunji herself was now twenty seven years old and she had had three children with her new husbands, two boys and a girl. I could see that she was expecting another child shortly (in two months time, they told me).

564 614 ●428 There appeared to be no *tarawads* with these people, and village names were used instead for the patrilineal clans, which were exogamous. There were *kiriyams*, also exogamous, and inheritance was *makkathayam*. The sub-caste was reputed to allow marriage of brothers and sisters; the Gazeteer mentions this on p. 133. When I asked Komon about it, he protested that it was calumny and that they had never done such a thing. In my opinion, the reputation wrongly based on insufficient evidence, comes from the fact that these people form a very small group and those persons who are of the same generation use classificatory kinship terms which are apt to make it appear that "sister" mar-

564 582 588 114

[Text continues on P. 216]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Thandans

association. That was why Shankara and they themselves later had sought and obtained wives of their own; mainly because the women "did not look after them", "did not satisfy them sexually". In principle, a common wife should not refuse herself to any one of her husbands, Panju said, but as in all things, excuses and evasions were easy to find, and the result was that the arrangement did not always work out satisfactorily for some. Nowadays, women had becomes most immoral, the informant complained; they were not at all chaste and had numerous extra-marital relations, in defiance of what was expected of them in the homes into which they had been married.

From here we were led to discuss jealousy. Did it exist among them? And if it did, how did they control it to make polyandry function? I was assured, of course, that it existed; had I not noticed how many polyandrous households were breaking up because of quarrelling? Their members quarrelled because there was rivalry among the men, jealousy of each other and a desire to be the sole possessor of the common wife. Panju agreed that, although there was no jealousy between himself and Narayana, both of them being liked equally by Nani who distributed her favours evenly to both of them, there had been much strife and unpleasantness in the days when they were married to Kuniyama with their elder brothers (they were too young for that in their first union with Devaki). That was why they had wanted a wife to themselves and obtained Nani from their maternal uncle. They got on with each other and liked working together, hence there was no jealousy between them and their polyandrous marriage functioned well.

Thandans are, as we have seen, *makkathayam*, and because of this the status of the children is perfectly clear: they are legally the offspring of their fathers and take their family name while inheriting the property from them at their death. They are also, of course, their mother's legal sons and daughters, but they do not carry on her lineage nor inherit from her brother as they would do, for instance, in a north Malabar Tiya *marumakkathayam* union.

With regard to paternity, the children belong to all the fathers collectively, and not to any particular one of them. They are never assigned to the elder father, as is sometimes the case with polyandrous peoples in other parts of the world. I asked both Panju and Nani if they knew who was the father of their different sons, and both of them told me that they "did not care" and that they had "no preference". I insisted that they could perhaps try to remember what had happened and who was the woman's partner at the probable date of conception, to calcu-

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Thandans

late the time back from the moment of birth; but they only laughed at my insistance and said that they could not. Obviously, the right thing to do was not to make any distinction, to accept the children as collectively theirs, without individual claims on them.

This is the public attitude which self-respecting polyandrous people must apparently take. Privately, things can be quite different, and from the information which I gathered from Panju and Nani, it is obvious that human nature reasserts itself even in this situation, in spite of cultural interdictions. Asked confidentially if he had any preference for one of his four boys, Panju replied that he believed that the two elder ones, Kumaran and Madhavan, were his because they were "more fond" of him than of Narayana. To emphasize this belief, he added that outside people thought that Sridaran and Raghavan resembled their younger father, while the other two were physically more like him. I heard, later, that Nani, in private, never in front of her husbands or even before the other children, would say to Kumaran: "Go on, be a man like your *achan* (father, the name given to Panju). He is a fine fellow whom you should take after!" There seemed to be no doubt that, behind the scenes and the facade which had to be maintained socially in this polyandrous society, a great amount of preference and distinction was shown for the individual, would-be, "real" father.

Panju claimed that he looked after the children more than his brother because he had more affection for them than Narayana. Here again, he seemed to be claiming a preferred position that could not fail to strike me. I asked him what names the children used for their fathers, and he gave me not only those for himself and his co-husband, but also (without my asking) for Raman and Sankara, who were considered to be uncles (fathers' brothers) because they were not part of the polyandrous household. Raman was called *wariachan*, "big father"; Sankara, *wawuachan*, "sickly father", because he had some kind of chronic stomach ailment (this reminded me of the "opium-eating father" in Ceylon, see p. 149); Panju, *achan*, "father"; and Narayana, *kutiachan* or "small father". In other words, even those brothers of the fathers who were no longer fathers in parental status were called "father", a classificatory term which obviously had no other reality after the break-up of the old association of all the brothers married to a common wife.

If a family has no issue, adoption of a child is possible, the latter then having exactly the same status as if it were one's own. The child has, however, to be legally registered with the authorities if it is to be an heir. Cases of such adoptions are extremely rare; my informants

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll

members have been the ablest of all in adapting themselves and in taking advantage of the new opportunities which the Europeans brought. To them have gone the best and most rewarding jobs both in and out of the administration, positions of trust and responsibility to which their long training as soldiers and managers of the upper castes in Kerala had possibly prepared them. I was astonished to find how many well-known names in present-day India still have their homes and families in Ottappalam of the Walluvanad taluk.

It has already been said how very much the Tiyas, everywhere in Kerala, have progressed, and how they, too, have taken enormous advantage of changed circumstances, especially education, to become today one of the most progressive communities in the State. Aiyappan's book is witness to this. Perhaps only the lower castes, such as Kammalans, other artisans, Cherumas, Pulayas, aboriginals and the poorer section of the Mopla Islamic community, have remained as they always were, and have shown no signs of taking advantage of the benefits brought in by foreign rule. It is not to be excluded, however, that it may be precisely for them that the new Communist government will legislate, especially for the landless agricultural labourers – but it is too early to say anything about this yet.[1]

Following closely upon the replacement of the old order by a new one, polyandry, too, has crumbled in Kerala. The Nayars, whose non-fraternal polyandrous customs so forcibly struck the early Portuguese and other European travellers, have ceased to practise polyandry, at least in the pristine form in which it was described by the ancient writers. Since this polyandry appears to have been closely correlated with the military organization of the Sudra militiamen of the local rajas and chieftains, it was perhaps to be expected that, when the latter disappeared, the custom of non-fraternal polyandrous marriage went with it. Particularly as men living in a *marumakkathayam* system of inheritance seem to suffer greatly from the fact that they can leave nothing to their children, but only to those of their sisters. In a conversation that I had with His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin, at Ernakulam on the 18th of April, 1949, he told me that it was "un-natural" for a man not to be able to provide for his own children, and that, in his opinion, the custom could not survive much longer for this reason.

[1] A step has been taken in this direction with *The Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill 1957* which introduces comprehensive land reforms, including the right of "permanent tenants" to purchase land held by them, a ceiling on land holdings and fixation of fair rents.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII

Because of the profound cultural changes which have fundamentally modified the social and economic structure of Kerala society, it can be said that polyandry is on the decline in that part of the world. Circumstances no longer favour the marriage of many men to one woman, and the custom is not only being abandoned as useless, but those who, by tradition, should follow it, look upon it with abhorrence and with growing disgust. To those who have practised it so long, as something good and moral, it has become, nowadays, something barbarous, primitive an unworthy of them: times have changed and it simply is not done any longer.

ADDENDUM

Act XVII of 1115, the Cochin Makkathayam Thiyya Act, passed by His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin on the 18th day of Kumbham 1115, corresponding to the 1st day of March 1940.

C.V. Iyyu, former Member of the legislative Assembly of Cochin State, told me on the 27th of October, 1949, that he was on the Commission which in 1937-38 drafted the Cochin *Makkathayam* Thiyya Act of 1940. The majority of the members of the Commission were Tiyas (Thiyyas) and the initiative of the enactment was due to V. K. Krishnan Kutti, M.L.A., *wakil* of Trichur, himself a Tiya. The Act is thus a Tiya legislative reform and not a foreign one. This would explain the fact that it is observed. I hear that the idea is a result of the education and progress of the Tiya community, which now ranks as one of the most accomplished in Kerala.

Some of the main provisions of the Act are given here below. They are those that concern definition of the name Thiyya, of an heir's sex in doubtful cases, acceptable forms of the marriage solemnity, prohibition of polyandry (art. 12), succession both testamentary and intestate:

Chapter I. Five articles.

Art. 5, (i): "Thiyya includes Ezhuva, Chova, Billava, Marayan, Thandan and others recognized as such." It adds: "When owing to any physical defect or deformity, it is not possible to ascertain the sex of any of the heirs of an intestate, such heirs shall, for the purpose of this Act, be regarded as female."

Chapter II. Marriage and its Dissolution. Thirteen articles.

Art. 6: "Conjugal union may be openly solemnized in any of the following ways:

a) by the tying of the Mangalya Sutram
b) by the presentation of cloth to the female by the male
c) by exchange of rings
d) by mutual garlanding, and

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll

671 [585]

e) by mutual consent evidenced by a registered instrument attested by not less than two witnesses."

[595]

Art. 12: "A polyandrous marriage performed after this Act shall be void."

Chapter III. Maintenance and Guardianship. Three articles.

Chapter IV. Succession.

Five articles on testamentary succession.

671 428

Art. 26: "For the purpose of succession there is no distinction between the self-acquired property and the ancestral property or between the property of a male and that of a female except as otherwise provided by this Act."

Eight articles on Intestate succession.

Art. 28: "Property in respect of which a Thiyya has died intestate devolves upon the wife or husband or upon those who are of the kindred of the deceased in this order and according to the rules herein prescribed."

Art. 29: "When the intestate had left more than one widow, the distribution of inheritance referred to in sections 30, 31, 32 and 33 shall be made as if there is only one widow, all the widows together taking equally one widow's share."

Art. 30. "When the intestate has left a widow, if he has also left a son, or lineal descendant of a son, a share equal to that of a son shall belong to the widow."

Eleven articles on distribution of intestate's property.

Art. 39, (b): "If some of them (lineal descendants) are his (the intestate) sons and others are his daughters, each daughter shall take a half of the share of a son if the intestate is a male, and if the intestate is a female all children shall take equally."

It should be remembered that this legislation is that of a former princely state which has ceased to exist as a separate unit. Today, since the coming into being of the State of Kerala, made up of Malabar, Mahe, Cochin and Travancore, this Act has been superseded by the provisions of the India Code in force now in the whole of the Indian Republic. In accordance with the stipulations of the Code, a larger share of inheritance is granted to daughters and widow than was formerly allowed by the Cochin *Makkathayam* Thiyya Act.

[648]

[PP 240-594 not Processed]

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

hardie as to come into that house. The king's children shall not inherit the kingdom after their father, because they hold this opinion, that perchance they were not begotten of the king their father, but of some other man, therefore they accept for their king one of the sonnes of the king's sisters, or of some other woman of the blood roiall, for that they be sure that they are of the blood roiall."

In his "New Account of the East Indies, (1727)" Hamilton wrote: "The husbands," of whom, he said, there might be twelve, but no more at one time, "agree very well, for they cohabit with her in their turns, according to their priority of marriage, ten days more or less according as they can fix a term among themselves, and he that cohabits with her maintains her in all things necessary for his time, so that she is plentifully provided for by a constant circulation. When the man that cohabits with her goes into her house he leaves his arms at the door, and none dare remove them or enter the house on pain of death. When she proves with child, she nominates its father, who takes care of his education after she has suckled it, and brought it to walk or speak, but the children are never heirs to their father's estate, but the father's sister's children are."

Writing in the latter half of the eighteenth century, Grose says * that "it is among the Nairs that principally prevails the strange custom of one wife being common to a number; in which point the great power of custom is seen from its rarely or never producing any jealousies or quarrels among the co-tenants of the same woman. Their number is not so much limited by any specific

* Travels to the East Indies.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

of drums, and cannonade of the little mortars. All those who are present are supposed to be fed from the temple. There is a large crowd. On the morning of the fifth day, a man of the washerman (Vannān) caste will announce to the neighbours by beat of tom-tom that there will be a procession of Bhagavati issuing from the gates of the temple, and passing round about. Like all those who are in any way connected with the temple, this man's office is hereditary, and he lives to a small extent on the bounty of the temple, *i.e.*, he holds a little land on nominal terms from the temple property, in consideration for which he must fulfil certain requirements for the temple, as on occasions of festivals. His office also invests him with certain rights in the community. In the afternoon of the fifth day, the Vannān and a Manūtan, the one following the other, bring two umbrellas to the temple; the former bringing one of cloth, and the latter one of cadjan (palm leaves). I am not sure whether the cloth umbrella has been in the possession of the Vannān, but think it has. At all events, when he brings it to the temple, it is in thorough repair—a condition for which he is responsible. The cadjan umbrella is a new one. Following these two as they walk solemnly, each with his umbrella, is a large crowd. There are processions of Bhagavati on the elephant encircling the temple thrice in the morning, at noon, and at night. Early on the sixth day, the headman of the Mukkuvans (fishermen), who by virtue of his headship is called the Arayan, together with the blacksmith and the goldsmith, comes to the temple followed by a crowd, but accompanied by no orchestra of drums. To the Arayan is given half a sack of rice for himself and his followers. A silver umbrella belonging to the temple is handed over to him, to be used when

K 131 595 596 428 591 Tiya Polyandry. The Tiyas living in Malabar, exhibit one especially interesting phenomenon: they are a polyandrous people who are patrilocal (that is, the woman marries and goes to live with her husbands), but also matrilineal (that is, the property that they have—and they do not have much, because they are common laborers—is inherited from the mother's brothers). Unfortunately, I did not have much time to investigate these people because the war broke out when I had only been at work among them for three weeks. Thus, the only thing I could note was that they are polyandrous, patrilocal, and matrilineal at the same time. I should like to return and see how this works out.

T: 123 To 123 K 123 *General Conclusions.* I am afraid that some of these results may seem superficial. I was unable to stay as long as I should have liked among all these peoples. I did not know any of their languages well, and to really do good field work, one would have to live among them and not put questions to them as I did. However, I hope to return and to do a more thorough study.

T: 155 To 155 K 155 As far as the psychoanalytical results are concerned, I think that they are highly illuminating, though not sufficiently ample to be conclusive. There are strong indications that, broadly speaking, psychic mechanisms, libidinal development and mental structure may be identical to those in the West. There are, thus, numerous instances of trends pointing to Oedipus and castration complexes. What I, however, really investigated insufficiently was where we should place the relative borderline between what is specifically culturally determined in psychology (such as traits due to family environment) and what is generally humanly so (such as sociobiological traits).

K 595 182 To 595 182 T: 595 182 As far as the ethnological results are concerned, these can be examined from two different angles. Functionally, polyandry fulfils the same purpose as all other marriages: it is a social institution for the satisfaction of the individual sexual in-

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

Munsifs and District Judges with summary jurisdiction in the matter." The provisions in the regulation apply only to "Kanam tenants who, by themselves or through their predecessors in interest, have uninterruptedly held the holding for a period of not less than thirty years prior to the coming into force of this Regulation," and provide some restrictions on the part of the landlord in matters of renewal of kanam holdings, and ejection of kanam tenants; and dispense altogether with the right of *Melkanam*. The Puravaka janmis in Watakancheri number 54, of whom a few are Nambudri Brahmans, the others being of various castes. The Nambudris are the big landlords.

These janmis also are in some cases the custodians of "devaswoms" (literally "wealth of the gods"), lands belonging to the local temples; these are treated by them just like their janmam lands, but they keep separate accounts for the same. The Sirkar also manages devaswom lands and there is a department in the State which manages the affairs of the temples and the property belonging to them.

Of the total number of landowners (about 150), only 34 with an area of 194·44 acres cultivate their own lands. The rest sublet.

Of the non-cultivating landowners a few are big janmis like the Nambudri Brahmans and the Paliath Atchan. The Nambudri Brahmans pursue no occupation but that of living in strict conformity with the duties of a Brahman. They study the Vedas and live a pious and cleanly life. Western civilization and ideas have not penetrated to them. They maintain the joint-property system in which the whole property descends to the eldest male member. Only the eldest male is allowed to enter into legal marriage, but he can marry two or three women; the rest keep Nayar females as their mistresses.*

The "Paliath Atchan" possesses much land in the State. The head of the family lives in a place near Cranganore. He manages his estates through departments and officials like the Sirkar. He is the biggest landlord in the State, and a powerful hereditary chief.

The small landowners who do not cultivate their lands pursue occupations like retail trade, Government service, law, etc. These generally sublet their lands to tenants who own no lands and try to exact from these latter as much rent as possible. There are also agricultural workers who neither own nor rent land; the caste of "Cherumas" belongs to this class. Also a few of the low castes, the Mappilas and in some cases the Christians,—male and female—engage themselves in such work. They are low paid. Formerly these wages were in kind, but money wages have begun to prevail; but for harvesting work wages are invariably paid in kind, the worker receiving one para of paddy for every six gathered in.

The rents of paddy lands are paid in kind.

Agriculture.—Paddy is grown on all the wet lands. Out of the seasons, the cultivators also grow to a small extent such grains as gram and peas in the paddy lands. Area under paddy—653·24 acres.

* [This phrase must not be understood to mean that such Nayar women are maintained in any way by their Nambudri paramours. They depend on their own family property, which descends in the female line. The children of Nambudri Brahmans and Nayar women are reckoned Nayars, and are members of the joint family of the mother, and entitled to maintenance from that family property.—Ed.]

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454 The families which have made savings are very few in proportion to the population both in the 'town' and in the village area. There is a big Nambudiri janmi in the village. He owns very much land which he has sublet and holds the custody of much [428] devaswom land. As the partition of family property does not exist in a Nambudiri family, their property only increases. The joint property system also obtains among the Nayars, but the Nayar families which are well-to-do and have made savings could be numbered on the fingers. The majority of them are poor and many of them occupy themselves in work for wages. The Brahmans other than Nambudiri Brahmans follow the divided property system.* I can only count four or five families which possess wealth to the value of Rs. 10,000 and above and only one or two which have Rs. 20,000. Most of the Brahmans are comparatively poor. Some are engaged in Government service for a paltry pay of Rs. 20 per month or less, and few are able to save much out of this pay.

No more capital is invested in agriculture than is absolutely necessary from year to year, as for replenishing the stock, implements, etc., and clearing the fields of rubbish and making it [312] ready to receive the rains. Bunds are also constructed, to store water in the water course which runs on the north of the village area, by persons whose lands lie near it, but these dams last only during the summer. A few indeed improve their land by digging it, and one or two have made new fields on land previously waste. About one-tenth of the savings could be said to be utilized in these ways. No one invests his earnings in savings banks.

[426] Lending to neighbours is *the* form of investing one's savings, until they come up to a round sum which can be invested in landed property. A few people in the town take advantage of others' difficulties to lend money at exorbitant interest. Many are in debt.

454 All castes and conditions of men try to accumulate their savings
525 by subscribing to a *kuri*. A *kuri* serves the purpose of a savings bank. There are three chief kinds—*bhangati-kuri*, auction-*kuri* and lottery-*kuri*. The first prevails among the lower castes and consists of small subscriptions. The *kuri* is started by a *kuri-muppan* (stake-holder) with a certain specified amount as principal, each member subscribing an equal amount. The stake-holder is entrusted with the task of giving a dinner to all the members, each member contributing two or four annas for the purpose. On the day appointed for the *kuri*, the members bid down the amount and the bidden amount is collected from each of the several members and paid to the bidder. Auction-*kuri* is similar to this, but the dinner is dispensed with and the *kuri* deals with large amounts subscribed by well-to-do men. In a lottery-*kuri*, a number of persons agree that each should subscribe a certain sum of money by periodical instalments and that each in his turn, as determined by lot, should take the whole of the subscription for each instalment, all being returned the amount of their subscriptions and the common fund being lent to each subscriber in turn.

454 Every decent householder among the Brahmans spends some
[301] money (at least Rs. 60) on gold ornaments for his wife or other female relatives. The other castes rarely use gold ornaments or jewellery of any cost.

* [I.e., on the death of a man his property is equally divided among his sons.—Ed.]

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423 kanomdars who live in the village also possess lands in the neighbouring villages. In the centre of the village a very sacred and [346] important temple is situated. It has existed for nearly a thousand years, and it is believed by all the people of Malabar that many miracles have from time to time happened there. Many rich devotees have granted lands to it, and it is now the most important landowner of the village, possessing the janmam right over nearly [651] 200 acres of land, all leased to kanomdars. A large part of the temple land is not taxed by the Government, but a low amount fixed by the Government is collected by the temple authorities for its maintenance. This kind of tax is called *Sarvamanyam*. The temple is now managed by the Court of Wards. It belonged to the Zamorin, who handed over his estate to the Court. The Zamorin is the head of a tarwâd* of about 300 members, being the oldest man. Hence when he succeeds he is too old to manage well.

427 452 It has been stated that the chief kanomdars excepting three cultivate only the small stips of lands that they occupy and leave it to others to cultivate the rest of their lands. They do not follow any other occupation, but lead an idle life, collecting money from their tenants and lending their money to the poor on security of ornaments and other things. The tendency is for every man who has money to be a money-lender. The sowcars are money-lenders by profession, but every man who has money, instead of depositing it in a bank, lends it to others on high rates of interest. The landowner, the vakil, the official or any other class forms no exception to this rule. Only the traders use the bank.

427 There are 525 tenants not possessing kanom rights who hold land under kanomdars, and 54 agricultural workers having no land and not renting land. The largest tenant is a Tiyya occupying 80 acres.

Rents are paid both in money and in kind. The chief crop of the village is coconut, but nearly one-fourth of the area is under paddy cultivation. Rents of the coconut areas are paid in money, and those of paddy lands in kind.

651 *Land Revenue.*—Rs. 6,411-7-0. This is small because of the exemption of temple lands.

241 The paddy fields all give two crops per annum. When once a coconut is planted, it lasts for nearly 100 years.

412 *Implements.*—There are 542 ploughs in the village, all of the primitive type.

The other implements used are—

(1) the levelling board,

(2) a long stick for powdering the soil,

(3) a short iron instrument somewhat in the shape of a knife for sowing the seed and transplanting,

(4) a rather long handled mamoti, a broad plate of iron sharp at one end and joined to a big stick at another somewhat perpendicularly,

(5) sickles,

(6) big rods used for winnowing the paddy and for separating the grain from the straw,

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• [428] * [i.e., a Navar family community, having inheritance in the female line. Such an estate is the joint property of all the *female* members of the family and their descendants, the male members of the family also having a right during their lives to support from the family estate, but not transmitting any right to their children.—Ed.]

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582 837 *Marriage customs.*—The custom of marriage before puberty is prevalent among Hindus, excepting Nambudris and Nayars. The Nambudris or Malabar Brahmans can give their daughters in marriage at any time they like or not marry them at all. Only the eldest male member of a Nambudri family can marry in his own caste. All the other sons keep Nayar women as mistresses. The eldest member can marry more than one wife, but many women of necessity have to remain unmarried.

[428] [586] The case of Nayars is entirely different. They follow a different system of inheritance, i.e., descent through the female. The result of this system is that the female is at full liberty to choose or to divorce husbands as she likes. The man also has the same liberty. As a consequence of the different systems of inheritance their marriage custom is also different. Before puberty some person closely connected with the family ties the sacred string round the neck of the girl. This custom is purely formal and does not make them husband and wife. Nowadays this formal business is done by the mother of the girl at the temple in the presence of God. After puberty the man who really wants to marry the girl (he must be of the same caste or some one belonging to a higher caste, preferably a Nambudri) comes and performs the real marriage. This real marriage is binding only so long as he and she will. Divorce can be had at any time by a mere word. The woman can marry again. The death of the man does not make [585] the woman a widow. There is no widowhood for Nayar woman. In fact there is no marriage among the Nayars. What actually happens is that somebody comes and lives with a woman for a time, then leaves, and both live with others. The only restriction is that two men cannot live with one woman at the same time, but one man can cohabit with any number of women at the same time. The children [428] born of such unions inherit the property of the uncle since the descent is by the female line. Nowadays there is a strong opinion against this system and the descent from father to son is advocated by the educated few, and the proposed regulations in Cochin are attempts to make marriage binding and permanent and dissoluble only under certain circumstances, widows being still allowed to remarry.

[587] [595] With regard to all other Hindus, marriage before puberty prevails. But among the lower classes widow-marriage is allowable, money for a bridegroom is not demanded, and even polyandry is prevalent among certain sections of the Tiyyas. But only brothers can share a wife. A brother can marry his widowed sister-in-law. *Divorce* is allowed in cases of serious infidelity but divorced men and women can marry again.

562 *The purdah system* is followed by the Nambudri women alone in Malabar. They cannot see men. Whenever they come out they hold a big native kind of umbrella to hide their faces and come to the temple, etc. The ideas about the purdah system among them are changing nowadays and the abandonment of the system is hoped for in a few years. The Nambudris are also advocating changes in their marriage customs.

428 The property of a Nambudri or Nayar family cannot be divided among the family sons. The eldest has the right to manage the property and enjoy the profits. The other members of the family have a right for maintenance only. When the eldest dies the next to him in age comes to the position. Inthe case of a Nambudri

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the brother or son, in the case of a Nayar the sister's son succeeds. The Travancore and Cochin royal families and the Zamorin family descend in the female line.

Water-supply.—Drinking water is supplied by the wells. Every house has one. The sinking of wells is easy here since the soil is loose and there is no rock and the height above the sea level is not much. Wealthy people build the well with granite, others leave it with mud banks. The labourers dig their wells themselves as it involves only two days' work. The wells never dry up. There are three public wells and two temple wells besides. Indeed the scarcity of water is not felt at all. But for bathing purposes the water in the tank is bad, and some people use well-water for the same. The quality of the well-water is fairly good.

Education.—There are seven schools of which one is a secondary school managed by the Taluk Board, one is a Government Girls' School and the other five are elementary schools, one being Muhammadan. There are 680 boys and 185 girls in attendance.

The education imparted is fairly satisfactory, special stress being laid onthe vernacular. According to the educational curriculum prescribed by the Director, the geography of the district, a little Indian History, a good training in the vernacular, a little Arithmetic, and the beginning of English by teaching the alphabet and small words, are all taught in the school.

Eighty per cent of the men and fifteen per cent of the women can read and write the vernacular; about two per cent can read and write English, and somewhat fewer speak it.

Forty boys have left the village and had a college course, and there is one girl matriculate.

About 20 boys after undergoing a little commercial training at Calicut have gone to Bombay and other commercial centres for employment.

It may here be mentioned that emigration to Ceylon is frequent. Emigrants return after three or four years, and remain in the village for one year, and again go to Ceylon. Nearly 150 have gone within recent years.

The only library in the village is the secondary school library which contains nearly 200 books, all juvenile. Five or six private persons possess some books. Some are lawyers and their books are connected with law. Others have only novels. Nobody takes study seriously. Nobody is interested in Science as a subject. This lack of enthusiasm for knowledge makes the Indian less original and less artistic. I know nobody in my village who has designed new arts or invented anything at all. This lack is everywhere visible in India and seen even among students who do not care to know anything more than those things which are prescribed for the examination. This fundamental weakness must be shamefully confessed, but there are signs of change in the right direction.

Village administration.—The head of the village is the *adhigari* or the village munsif. He is the representative of the King-Emperor. He collects the revenue, looks after the affairs of the village, has the jurisdiction over minor civil and criminal cases, controls the roads, Government lands and trees and other public places—in fact he represents every function, in a greater or lesser degree, of the King-Emperor, and is the guardian of the public peace. He must

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India

APPENDIX.

I. A Possible Improvement.

By deepening the stream that flows in rainy season along the northern boundary of this desam, the lands that lie along them which now yield only a single crop can be made double crop lands. 000

II. Emigration.

There are five men in Ceylon working as labourers and sending small sums to their aged parents. These return at intervals of two or three years. There is also the annual emigration of the carpenters to Calicut. 167

III. A Typical Family.

The family is not composed of a husband, wife and children. The people follow the 'Marumakkattayam' form of inheritance, i.e., inheritance along the line of the nephew. Thus the family consists of an aged mother or grandmother and her sisters and brothers, the sons and daughters of these sisters and their progeny, and so on. The eldest male member is the 'Karnavan,' the guardian and manager of the family, all the rest are 'Anandravans' who pay allegiance to the head. The male members of one family marry the females of another and vice versa, but each lives apart and they only join occasionally. The system, however, is rudely breaking up under modern conditions. 594 [428]

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
Kerala AW11

here turns out to be patrilineal and patrilocal. We shall see that, as usual, the question of descent is attached to the same general structures as elsewhere.

We first note that the "patrilineage" of the South is called a *taravad* like the matrilineal units of the Nayar. The patrilineage is reported to be exogamous with a depth of five to seven generations united by the worship of lineage gods, ancestors, and snakes. Marriage tends to be patrilocal, and one of the interesting features of the Tiyyar of this area is that, as with the Sinhalese, polyandrous marriages are freely permitted. A woman is married to a group of brothers who have access to her, it is said, by order of seniority. The ceremony of marriage again involves the gift of the cloth, and we note the custom of feeding the groom or grooms and the bride with porridge and milk as with various groups in Ceylon.

Inheritance is in the male line, but women retain rights in their natal household. Indeed, this right is expressed in the customary relations between brothers and sisters. At divorce, the woman returns to her brother. Her eldest brother is considered her guardian. At the death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe ritual pollution. At the death of a man, his sister's sons observe pollution and perform mourning offerings to his spirit.

The customary claim of the MB and the FZ are given recognition in numerous ceremonies. In the prepuberty rituals, a girl goes through a mock-marriage ceremony with a boy from a "lineage" into which she might marry, who clearly stands to her in the relation of cross-cousin. Her "mother's brother's wife" (FZ?) parts her hair in certain pregnancy ceremonies. The ritual husband-boy is brought by his MB, and the girl by her MB. The boy places the *tali* necklace—indicative of married status—on her neck, where it is tied by her FZ.

Gough notes that cross-cousin marriage is "preferential," though with the observation that it is not "enjoined to the extent" that it is in the North (1955*a*, p. 62). It is clear that this statement refers to actual cross-cousin, not categorical cross-cousin, marriage. We are informed that parallel cousins on both sides are tabooed and must conclude that here again we have the Dravidian pattern of categorical cross-cousin marriage.

I have no information about the terminology of reference or address, though it seems likely that terms of reference, at least, are identical to those of the North Tiyyar.

I think that all the elements of the general structure can be detected in this system. There is categorical cross-cousin marriage, and the various claims of the MB and FZ upon Ego are indicated in ritual terms. This is quite in accordance, as we noted before, with the strong

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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Malabar, in which patrilineal and matrilineal castes who are similar in their kinship customs are described, and again we find that other sections of the same casts are patrilineal or matrilineal in different localities. In parts of Ceylon I would hear villagers suggest that sons took their "names" from their father and daughters from their mother, a reflection not so much of descent (for these ideas were not applied in practice) but of the difference between the sexes.

Even the Muslims are not very different. On the Malabar coast the diversity of origins in the Muslim community can be easily traced in the complex body of customs, appellations, different signs, and practice whereby subgroups appear to distinguish one another. Gough (1961) has discussed some features of the matrilineal Muslims (Mapilla); D'Souza (1959) in a carefully documented article observes that, leaving aside a special group who call themselves *Arabi* and attempt to follow traditional Islam, Muslims in general conform to the patterns of kinship usual in Malabar and are divided into patrilineal and matrilineal *taravads* (p. 492). Moreover, in the case of patrilineal *taravads*, several of them again come together to form an *endogamous* group; hence in any locality there are several endogamous Moplah groups (p. 493). He goes on to make the following observation (p. 498):

> In the coastal North Malabar, as one proceeds southwards to places like Quilandy and Badagara, the mother right social organization undergoes a change. The change becomes quite distinct in the coastal region of South Malabar. The change in mother right traits . . . may be primarily attributed to the fact that whereas in North Malabar the ancestral property is inherited exclusively in the female line, in the south it is inherited . . . in the male line. But the social organization is essentially mother right and the modifications are such as suit the change in the principle of inheritance.

It is not merely this shifting picture of descent and inheritance which strikes one as being entirely in line with the material collected by Iyer (1909, 1912, 1937) in all kinds of small caste groups, for D'Souza (1959, p. 502) firmly establishes that the Muslim Mapilla also follow the Nambudiri–Nayar model of hypergamy with considerable dedication: "For instance, the Thangal males can marry women from any other groups of Moplahs [Mapilla] but Thangal women cannot marry any man other than a Thangal. An Arabi male can marry any [Mapilla] woman other than a Thangal, but the Arabi woman can marry, besides an Arabi male, only a Thangal male, and so on."

There is little doubt that the marriage customs recorded by D'Souza bear a close similarity to those recorded for the Moors of Ceylon earlier in this volume. D'Souza's evidence on names is not directed to the question of hypergamy and prestige, but it does appear that names